

The Basic Difference Between Choices and Offer vs Serve

Choices

Whenever possible all children should be given choices of different foods in each component food group. Offering choices gives students more of an opportunity to select foods they will eat, and recognizes the fact that not all students have the same tastes. It increases the chance that more children will choose to have a school lunch and that a student will select and eat a full meal. Our goal in the Child Nutrition Programs is to encourage the consumption of a wide variety of nutritious foods in well-balanced, healthful meals.

Example: white or chocolate milk

Offer Versus Serve

General Rules:

- Allows students to decline a certain number of food items in the meal.

- Reduces food waste and food costs.

- The meal must be priced as a unit and may be counted as reimbursable.

- Must be implemented in senior high schools for lunch.

- Is optional at all lower grade levels.

- Options: decline only one item, upper elem grades only

Example: milk or no milk

For food based menus, both Traditional and Enhanced:

NSLP --

All five food items must be offered to all students.

Serving sizes must equal minimum required quantities by age or grade group.

Secondary students have the option of which one or two food item(s) to decline. Other options for lower grades...

SBP --

All four food items must be offered to students.

Serving sizes must equal minimum quantities required by age or grade group.

Students have the option of which one item to decline.

For nutrient based menus, both NuMenus and Assisted NuMenus:

NSLP –

Minimum of three menu items offered to include an entree and a milk.

Student must select at least two items and one must be an entree.

If more than three items offered, student may decline no more than two.

SBP –

Minimum of three menu items must be offered.

Student must select at least two items.

May decline a maximum of one item.

References:

pages 52, 80, 243

A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals, 1998